

## Message Text

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13-12

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

/058 W

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R 251014Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2142

INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, NI

SUBJECT: END OF PURGE ANNOUNCED

REF: A. LAGOS 11443 AND PREVIOUS, B. LAGOS 11238

SUMMARY: FMG ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 21 THAT COUNTRY-WIDE PURGE OF PUBLIC SERVICES IS NOW OVER WITH EXCEPTION OF ARMED FORCES, WHERE EXERCISE WILL CONTINUE. ANNOUNCEMENT CAME AMID RISING UNHAPPINESS AND CRITICISM FMG ROLE CONTINUING MASS DISMISSALS AND WAS ACCOMPANIED BY ADMISSION EXERCISES HAD RESULTED IN EXCESSIVE BUREAUCRATIC CAUTION TO POINT OF PARALYSIS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN REMARKS AT SWEARING-IN OF FEDERAL PERMANENT SECRETARIES AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS (IN WHICH THEY TOOK SPECIAL OATH TO ESCHEW CORRUPTION), CHIEF OF STAFF BRIG. OBASANJO ON NOVEMBER 21 ANNOUNCED COUNTRY-WIDE PURGE OF PUBLIC SERVICE IS NOW OVER. OFFICIAL STATEMENT SAME DAY, SIGNED BY OBASANJO, REITERATED THIS; ASSURED THAT PUBLIC SERVICES CAN NOW SETTLE DOWN TO NORMAL LIFE; EXPRESSED HOPE THAT MASS REMOVALS WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY AGAIN, BUT WARNED OF FMG'S DUTY "TO INSURE THAT THE SERVICES DO NOT DRIFT BACK INTO THE APPALLING STATE THAT EXISTED BEFORE," AND SAID FMG WOULD NOT HESITATE TAKE DRASTIC CORRECTIVE STEPS IN

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FUTURE. STATEMENT ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT COMMITTEE BEING SET

UP ADVISE ON POSSIBLE MEASURES FOR REDUCING "SOCIAL PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE MASS REMOVAL EXERCISES," INCLUDING RESETTLEMENT OF RETIREES (EXCLUDING THOSE SACKED FOR ABUSE OF OFFICE) IN OTHER SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY.

2. ADDRESSING PERSECS AT SWEARING -IN CEREMONY, OBASANJO ADMITTED THAT PURGE HAD HAD UNSETTLING EFFECT ON SERVICES, CAUSING BUREAUCRATS APPLY "EXCESSIVE CAUTION IN THEIR WORK TO THE POINT OF PARALYSIS." ANOTHER UNDESIRABLE SIDE EFFECT HAD BEEN PROLIFERATION OF WHISPERING CAMPAIGNS AND ANONYMOUS LETTERS. (COMMENT. TWO LETTERS RECENTLY DELIVERED TO EMBASSY: ONE DEMANDING REMOVAL OF OBASANJO FOR CORRUPTION, THE OTHER DEMANDING HEAD OF STATE MUHAMMED ANSWER WIFE-BEATER QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS INCOME. WHISPERING CAMPAIGN MAY HAVE BEEN UNSETTLING NOT ONLY TO SAMLL FRY IN BUREAUCRACY BUT TO LEADERSHIP AS WELL. END COMMENT.)

3. OBASANJO, CONTINUING LINE FIRST TAKEN BY MUHAMMED AT SWEARING-IN OF FEDERAL COMMISSIONERS IN AUGUST, TOLD PERMSECS THAT DOMINANT ROLE WHICH CIVIL SERVANTS HAD PLAYED IN POLICY MAKING MUST BE REDUCED, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE. UNDER CIVIL GOVERNMENT, HE WARNED, PUBLIC SERVANTS WOULD CARRY OUT POLICY, NOT MAKE IT. HE SAID GUIDE-LINES OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE, CLEARLY SPELLING OUT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERMANENT SECRETARIES AND COMMISSIONERS, WOULD BE COMING OUT SOON.

4. NOVEMBER 21 STATEMENT SPECIFICALLY EXEMPTED ARMED FORCES FROM END OF CLEAN-UP EXERCISE. PURGE IN ARMED FORCES HAS BEEN HINTED AT REPEATEDLY BY SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS INCLUDING OBASANJO, PRESS NOW REPORTING SACKINGS OF "DEAD-WOODS (SIC)" FROM ARMED FORCES (REF. B) BUT GIVES NO FIGURES AS TO NUMBERS INVOLVED. LEADERSHIP IS ATTEMPTING MAKE CLEAR TO OFFICERS, HOWEVER, THAT ONLY IDLE AND IRRESPONSIBLE NEED FEAR FOR THEIR JOBS. THIS IS LINE WHICH BRIGADIER ABISOYE, GOC THIRD INFANTRY BRIGADE, WAS REPORTED BY PRESS TO HAVE TAKEN IN TALKING WITH TROOPS AT BIU IN NORTH EASTERN STATE; THE BRIGADIER SAID ARMY WANTS QUALITY RATHER THAN QUANTITY IN OFFICER CORPS. EXPECTED DURATION OF PURGE IN MILITARY NOT STATED. "DAILY EXPRESS" REPORTS EXERCISE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WILL LAST "UNTIL THE END OF THE MONTH" BUT WHETHER THIS REFLECTS INSIDE INFORMATION OR MERELY GUESSWORK UNCLEAR.

5. COMMENT: THIS IS SECOND TIME SINCE JULY COUP THAT FMG HAS ANNOUNCED END OF CIVIL SERVICE PURGE (LAGOS 9324). IT COMES AT TIME OF RISING UNHAPPINESS AND BITTERNESS ON PART PUBLIC SERVANTS WHO FEARFUL LOSS OF LIVELIHOOD AND RESENTFUL THAT SOME HAVE LOST JOBS UNFAIRLY. MANY INDIVIDUALS

BOTH IN AND OUT OF CIVIL SERVICE VOICING CRITICISM THAT EXERCISE HAS GONE TOO FAR AND IS BEING USED BY UNSCRUPULOUS INDIVIDUALS TO CARRY OUT PERSONAL VENDETTAS. MOVEOVER, THERE HAD INDEED BEEN SIGNS OF GOVERNMENT PARALYSIS AS RESULT HESITANCY ON PART OF CIVIL SERVANTS TAKE DECISIONS WHICH MIGHT GET THEM IN TROUBLE (CEMENT SCANDAL WAS STARK VYRYOINDER OF WHAT CAN HAPPEN TO BLUNDERERS), AS WELL AS CONTINUED UNCERTAINTY OVER JOB SECURITY. NEW REGIME CAN HARDLY HAVE BEEN UNAWARE THIS MOUNTING DESGRUNTLEMENT AND WE BELIEVE THAT THIS TIME FMG MEANS WHAT IT SAYS: THAT MASS SACKINGS WILL END. LEADERSHIP APPARENTLY HOPEFUL THIS LATEST ANNOUNCEMENT WILL ENABLE BUREAUCRACY GET BACK TO BUSINESS OF RUNNING COUNTRY RATHER THAN DEVOTING ENERGIES TO KEEPING THEIR JOBS. PROCLAMATION THAT IT IS TIME FOR BUREAUCRACY "SETTLE DOWN" DOES NOT RPT NOT MEAN, HOWEVER, THAT INVESTIGATIONS INTO ALLEGED CORREPTION CIVIL SERVANTS WILL CEASE NOR DOES IT MEAN THAT THOSE FOUND GUILTY OF ABOSE OF OFFICE AND ILLEGAL MONETARY GAIN WILL BE ABLE TO KEEP THEIR JOBS. ARMED FORCES CLEANUP WILL PRESUMABLY BE CONDUCTED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MINIMIZE UNCERTAINTY, PUBLICITY AND LARGE-SCALE UNHAPPINESS.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ARMED FORCES, POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, PERSONNEL SEPARATIONS, LABOR FORCE, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 25 NOV 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** greeneet  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975LAGOS11650  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750410-0305  
**From:** LAGOS  
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**Image Path:**  
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**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 75 LAGOS 11443, 75 LAGOS 11238  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** greeneet  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 27 AUG 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <27 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <17 DEC 2003 by greeneet>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** END OF PURGE ANNOUNCED  
**TAGS:** PGOV, PINS, PINT, SOCI, NI  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006